

# Employment First Strategic Planning

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# Agenda

- Why DSPD must address employment first
- What is employment first?
- Overview of identified: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
- Next steps

# Why DSPD must address employment first?

- Utah Legislation: Employment First approach must be used
  - HB 240, 2011 and HB 296, 2012
- Utah Employment First Partnership: DWS, USOR, DSPD, and Mental Health/Substance

# Utah's Employment First Language

“Give priority to providing services that assist the person in obtaining and retaining meaningful gainful employment.”

2011 HB 240

DSPD's Mission: to Promote Opportunities and Provide Supports for Persons with Disabilities to lead self-determined lives.

# National Movement

- Employment as a First priority
- Must examine all parts of the system; quality assurance, policies, data, capacity building, funding
- Many states start with grassroots efforts, but ultimately must be implemented through state systems
- Focus is increasing community employment- NOT eliminating facility-based services

**The benefit of an Employment First policy is that it sets a clear direction in terms of priorities and use of resources.**

**But it will only be successful if the vision of Employment First is integrated within the wide range of policies, procedures, and processes that impact employment of people with disabilities.**



## *Employment First: Where are we headed?*

- People with significant disabilities fully accepted and supported in the workplace in typical jobs
- People with disabilities expecting to go to work
- Major evolution of service system
  - *Paid supports available and provided on as-need basis*
- The end of the “guarantee” of a 9 to 3 day program
- People with disabilities increasingly part of economic mainstream
- People with disabilities making full use of their skills, gifts, and talents

# EF Annual Report - excerpt

- Strategic planning process: involve DSPD stakeholder collaboration to ensure Employment First legislation is implemented in a thoughtful, purposeful way.
- Implementation of legislation involves transformation of several processes that may include: internal and external training; person centered planning; service descriptions and changes to Medicaid waivers; reimbursement methodology; etc.



## SWOT of Employment First...

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Opportunities
- Threats

Identifies the context of the environment in which we are working.

# Strengths

- Employment First (EF) Legislation requires DSPD to focus on EF
- Person centered planning approach already in place
- Support for Employment First mission within DSPD and a passionate leader
- Supported employment program is already well established through SWI program and contracts so do not have to start from scratch

# Strengths continued ...

- Employment first will provide a service option for individuals on waiting list
- Partnerships exist with other agencies working on EF including USOR and DHS, Mental Health and Substance Abuse
- Existing USTEP system can be modified to incorporate components of EF

# Weaknesses

- Very limited on staff and funds to implement Employment First objectives
- Some DSPD staff, parents, providers and consumers may not be aware of EF and/or believe in EF philosophy

# Weaknesses (continued) . . .

- Current Funding structure for services make it difficult to implement EF philosophy
- Modification of existing contracts may be necessary
- Existing waivers (community supports, acquired brain injury & physical disabilities) and other processes could create roadblocks and require changes.

# Opportunities

- National movement toward employment first
- Overall Utah environment supportive of employment
- Providers have been really supporting employment (example RISE)
- USOR has been very open to working with DSPD on supported employment.

# Opportunities (continued) ...

- National training program on customized employment and discovery process available to stakeholders
  - Discovering Personal Genius
- Employment first could be incorporated into the person centered planning approach
- Some parents are expressing interest in supported employment

# Threats

- Prevailing philosophy does not support employment first
- Existing funding issues plus potential impact of sequestration
- Current perspective: changing to employment first will be difficult and people resist change and fear the unknown.



# Threats (continued . . .)

- Difficulty for parents or community living providers in moving away from standard “six hour” day due to loss of structure and safety existing in current setting.
- Challenges faced by provider staff:
  - turnover;
  - competing service demands; and
  - skills lacking to do individualized employment

# Threats (continued . . .)

- Federal definition of supported employment based on VR law does not allow subminimum wage but community support waiver does allow subminimum wage.
  - providers might be getting different levels of funding for doing the same thing for different clients.
  - Differential in rate for providing employment supports could bias outcomes.

# Input on ...

- Solicit input on SWOT Analysis from DSPD Advisory Committee
- Input on next steps
- Initiate strategic planning process

## To participate in Strategic Planning Process

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Following slides may not be  
necessary and are only kept  
for reference in discussion

# DSPD flow of application & intake of client

Flow of client through:

- Application
- Intake
- Waiting list
- Support Work Independence (SWI)
- Acceptance into long term care

# Application process and intake of client to DSPD







